

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner finalized a Restriction Requirement, rejected claim 9 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, and rejected claims 1-4, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 21-33 under 35 USC § 103(a). These rejections are fully traversed below. In addition, the Examiner indicated that claims 5-10, 13-16, 19 and 20 recite allowable subject matter.

Claims 2-10, 13-15, 17, 19 and 20 have been amended to place the application in condition for allowance. Specifically, with regard to the rejection under the second paragraph of USC § 112 for indefiniteness, it should be noted that claims 7 and 9 are now clearly different. In addition, with respect to the rejection under 35 USC § 103(a), it should be noted that the amendments to the claims render this rejection moot. Specifically, in the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 5-10, 13-16, 19 and 20 recite allowable subject matter. Hence, to expedite prosecution, the application has been amended to conform to the subject matter which the Examiner stated was allowable. Specifically, claims 5-8, 13-15 19 and 20 have been amended to place them in independent form. Claims 9 and 10 have been amended to depend from claim 5. Finally, to expedite prosecution, claims 1, 11, 12, 16 and 21-33 have been cancelled from the application, though Applicants reserve the right to reintroduce these claims in a subsequent continuation application.

Applicants have not received back an initialed form PTO-1449 that accompanied the Information Disclosure Statement filed Feb. 8, 2002 (received February 28, 2002) which identified three references. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner return with the next Office Communication a copy of the form PTO-1449 indicating the Examiner's consideration of these references. A replacement copy of such Information Disclosure Statement can be provided to the Examiner upon request.

Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that all claims (claims 2-10, 13-15 and 17-20) are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and an early notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner

believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

If there are any issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Applicants hereby petition for an extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension or any further fee required in connection with the filing of this Amendment is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0388 (Order No. SDK1P003).

Respectfully submitted,
BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Douglass Thomas".

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